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In Four Volumes

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N^o 86. *Friday, June 8.*

Heu quam difficile est crimen non prodere vultu! Ovid.

THERE are several Arts which all men are in some measure masters of, without having been at the pains of learning them. Every one that speaks or reasons is a Grammarian and a Logician, though he may be wholly unacquainted with the rules of Grammar or Logick, as they are delivered in books and systems. In the same manner, every one is in some degree a master of that Art which is generally distinguished by the name of Physiognomy; and naturally forms to himself the character or fortune of a stranger, from the features and lineaments of his face. We are no sooner presented to any one we never saw before, but we are immediately struck with the idea of a proud, a reserved, an affable, or a good-natured man; and upon our first going into a company of strangers, our benevolence or aversion, awe or contempt, rises naturally towards several particular persons, before we have heard them speak a single word, or so much as know who they are.

Every passion gives a particular cast to the countenance, and is apt to discover it self in some feature or other. I have seen an eye curse for half an hour together, and an eye-brow call a man scoundrel. Nothing is more common than for lovers to complain, resent, languish, despair, and die, in dumb show. For my own part, I am so apt to frame a notion of every man's humour or circumstances by his looks, that I have sometimes employed my self from *Charing-Cross* to the *Royal-Exchange* in drawing the characters of those who have passed by me. When I see a man with a sour rivell'd face, I cannot forbear pitying his wife; and when I meet with an open ingenuous countenance, think on the happiness of his friends, his family, and relations.

I cannot recollect the Author of a famous saying to a stranger who stood silent in his company, *Speak that I may see thee*: But, with submission, I think we may be better known by our looks than by our words, and that a man's speech is much more easily disguised than his countenance.

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nance. In this case, however, I think the air of the whole face is much more expressive than the lines of it: the truth of it is, the air is generally nothing else but the inward disposition of the mind made visible.

Those who have established Physiognomy into an art, and laid down rules of judging mens tempers by their faces, have regarded the features much more than the air. *Martial* has a pretty Epigram on this subject.

*Crine ruber, niger ore, brevis pede, lumine laesus;
Rem magnam praestas, Zoile, si bonus es.*

*Thy beard and head are of a different die;
Short of one foot, distorted in an eye:
With all these tokens of a knave compleat,
Should'st thou be honest, thou'rt a devilish cheat.*

I have seen a very ingenious Author on this subject, who founds his speculations on the supposition, that as a man hath in the mould of his face a remote likeness to that of an Ox, a Sheep, a Lion, an Hog, or any other creature; he hath the same resemblance in the frame of his mind, and is subject to those passions which are predominant in the creature that appears in his countenance. Accordingly he gives the prints of several faces that are of a different mould, and by a little over-charging the likeness, discovers the figures of these several kinds of brutal faces in human features. I remember in the life of the famous Prince of *Conde* the writer observes, the face of that Prince was like the face of an Eagle, and that the Prince was very well pleased to be told so. In this case therefore we may be sure, that he had in his mind some general implicit notion of this art of Physiognomy which I have just now mentioned; and that when his Courtiers told him his face was made like an Eagle's, he understood them in the same manner as if they had told him, there was something in his looks which shewed him to be strong, active, piercing, and of a royal descent. Whether or no the different motions of the animal spirits in different passions, may have any effect on the mould of the face when the lineaments are pliable and tender, or whether the same kind of souls require the same kind of habitations, I shall leave to the consideration of the curious. In the mean time I think nothing can be more glorious than for a man to give the lie to his face, and to be an honest, just, good-natured man, in spite of all those marks and signatures which nature seems to have set upon him for the contrary. This very often happens among those, who instead of being exasperated

ted by their own looks, or envying the looks of others, apply themselves entirely to the cultivating of their minds, and getting those beauties which are more lasting, and more ornamental. I have seen many an amiable piece of deformity; and have observed a certain chearfulness in as bad a system of features as ever was clapped together, which hath appeared more lovely than all the blooming charms of an insolent beauty. There is a double praise due to virtue, when it is lodged in a body that seems to have been prepared for the reception of vice; in many such cases the soul and the body do not seem to be fellows.

Socrates was an extraordinary instance of this Nature. There chanced to be a great Physiognomist in his time at *Athens*, who had made strange discoveries of mens tempers and inclinations by their outward appearances. *Socrates's* disciples, that they might put this Artist to the tryal, carried him to their master, whom he had never seen before, and did not know he was then in company with him. After a short examination of his face, the Physiognomist pronounced him the most lewd, libidinous, drunken old fellow that he had ever met with in his whole life. Upon which the disciples all burst out a laughing, as thinking they had detected the falshood and vanity of his art. But *Socrates* told them, that the principles of his art might be very true, notwithstanding his present mistake; for that he himself was naturally inclined to those particular vices which the Physiognomist had discovered in his countenance, but that he had conquered the strong dispositions he was born with by the dictates of Philosophy.

We are indeed told by an ancient Author, that *Socrates* very much resembled *Silenus* in his face; which we find to have been very rightly observed from the statues and busts of both, that are still extant; as well as on several antique seals and precious stones, which are frequently enough to be met with in the cabinets of the curious. But however observations of this nature may sometimes hold, a wise man should be particularly cautious how he gives credit to a man's outward appearance. It is an irreparable injustice we are guilty of towards one another, when we are prejudiced by the looks and features of those whom we do not know. How often do we conceive hatred against a person of worth, or fancy a man to be proud and ill-natred by his aspect, whom we think we cannot esteem too much when we are acquainted with his real character? Dr. *Moore*, in his admirable system of ethicks, reckons this particular inclination to take a prejudice against a man for his looks, among the smaller vices in morality, and, if I remember, gives it the name of a *Prosopolepsia*.